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PRESENT CONDITION OF COMMON SCHOOL EDUCATION IN THE UNITED STATES.

We commence in this number, the publication of such information as we have been able to collect by correspondence, and exchange of documents, respecting the organization and condition of the school system of other States, as an Appendix to the Third Annual Report of the Board of Commissioners of Common Schools. We hope to make this appendix as valuable in reference to Public Instruction in the United States, as the appendix to the Report for 1840, was to the school systems of the different countries in Europe. After extracting liberally from such official documents as have come into our possession, we shall draw up a summary of the school law of each State.

We have aimed to collect information respecting the system of public schools in the cities and large towns of these States, for it is in the cities and large towns of our own State that there are the greatest facilities and the most pressing occasion for improvement. The city of Middletown is the only one which has begun the work on a scale commensurate with its importance.

NEW YORK.

Annual Report of the Superintendent of Common Schools, made January, 1841, pp. 138.

This last Report of the Superintendent possesses unusual interest. In addition to the large mass of valuable statistical information, there are many valuable suggestions in the Report and the Appendix, which are of general interest. We shall transfer them, as far as our limits will permit, to the Journal. Those who would see a full account of the Common School system of New York, we refer to Vol. I, p. 75, and Vol. II, p. 171.

CONDITION OF THE COMMON SCHOOLS IN 1839.

(1.) Number of towns and cities from which returns were received, 826

[NOTE 1. This is all but two in the state, and these two are small and new, and probably have no organized school districts.]

Whole number of school districts, 10,706

(2.) Number of districts from which reports were received, 10,397

[NOTE 2. The deficiency of reported districts, is attributed, by the Superintendent, to the neglect of the trustees of the districts, and to the fact that no schools were kept during the year. A forfeiture of the school money is the consequence of this neglect.]

Number of children over 4 and under 16, exclusive of the city of New York, 592,564

(3.) Do. including city of New York, (62,952) 655,516

[NOTE 3. The number here given is 16,500 more than is ascertained by the last United States census. The Superintendent in looking for reasons for this discrepancy seems to forget, that it is the interest of districts to enumerate all of the children of the specified age, and that trustees are more likely to err in returning too many, than too few. There is the same discrepancy in this state between the United States census, and the returns of the district committees.]

(4.) Number of children returned as receiving instruction in the common schools, 572,995

[NOTE 4. Without wishing to invalidate the general accuracy of these statistics, we must be permitted to question the correctness of this item. It is calculated to mislead the friends of education here and elsewhere, and to show a success in the practical working of the school system of New York which has not attended any other system of public instruction in any part of the world. From data given in the appendix of this Report it is evident there must be errors in the elements of the calculation made by the Superintendent.

Thus, the whole number between 5 and 16 returned, exclusive of the city of New York is stated to be 592,564

By turning to the summary Appendix B, it appears that 23,538 is entered as of this age against New York, and would seem, therefore, to be included in the above aggregate. Deducting this number, it leaves the number between the ages of 5 and 16, 569,026

The whole number attending school out of the city of New York, is put down at 549,407

Showing a difference of only 19,619 which is not equal to the number in private schools.

But in the number attending schools are included all over 4 and under 16, and all who go for any period of the year, so that no comparison can be properly instituted between the two aggregates.

If we suppose, that the proportion of children over 16 and under 5 in the New York schools, to be the same as in Connecticut, and in Massachusetts, we shall find that at least one tenth of all the children between the ages of 5 and 16 were not in the public schools.

upon the voluntary and gratuitous services of private citizens. Occasionally, and at intervals such aid may be expected, and serves a valuable purpose in exciting the attention of the public and the interest of parents, and in stimulating the efforts of teachers and the ambition of their pupils. But the careful and vigilant inspection, upon which the advancement of our schools so essentially depends, can be secured only as other public services are obtained, by an adequate compensation to agents employed for the purpose. The observations of M. Cousin, upon the salutary effects of a system of thorough inspection in Holland, are confirmed by our own experience. Without it, the schools remain stationary or retrograde. In our primary schools, the great want is, an impelling power to elevate and extend the character of the instruction given. There is no reason why the highest branches of English education taught in our academies, may not be pursued in our common schools. Much would be accomplished in the attainment of such an object by an immediate and direct supervision of competent officers, devoting their time to the subject.

TEACHERS' WAGES.

The gradual increase of the rate of male teachers' wages for several years, is shown by the following table.

In 1831, the rate was	.....	\$11 85	per month.
1832, do.	.....	12 22	do.
1834, do.	.....	12 70	do.
1835, do.	.....	12 90	do.
1837, do.	.....	13 93	do.
1838, do.	.....	16 50	do.
1839, do.	.....	18 00	do.

This very gratifying result shows that this meritorious class of our fellow citizens, who devote themselves to the business of teaching, are better appreciated, and are beginning to receive something like a compensation for services, the real value of which, it would be difficult to estimate.

The steady and regular increase of teachers' wages, proves that qualifications for the employment and fidelity in its discharge will be remunerated, and should induce the young men of our state to make the business of teaching a permanent profession. Parents who have once had the opportunity of perceiving the effect upon the minds and habits of their children, produced by a really competent teacher, will never withhold the small additional sum required to secure such services. It is in the power of teachers themselves to insure a liberal compensation, by proving that they can render more than an equivalent. This proof will always be furnished to an anxious and affectionate parent, by the improvement of his child, not only in the branches of education in which he is instructed, but in the development of his mind, in the propriety of his conduct, and in his desire for knowledge. They can also obtain for their profession that consideration which is so essential to success, by showing themselves entitled to it from their attainments, their devotedness, and their good conduct. And parents should remember that the teacher whom they contemn, will be little regarded by their children, and that the moment a pupil loses that respect for his instructor which induces a submission of the unruly will to another, that moment his chance for improvement is gone.

The crowded state of all the other professions, affords a still stronger inducement to those who are qualified, to enter upon this, where the harvest is rich and ripe, and the laborers few. And in this, as in every other employment, the highest reward will attend the highest qualifications and the faithful application of them. Among those rewards should be considered as not by any means the least, the consciousness of the inestimable benefits conferred upon those, to whose hands the destinies of the country are so soon to be confided.

THE DEPARTMENTS FOR THE INSTRUCTION OF TEACHERS OF COMMON SCHOOLS.

The departments in the various academies for this purpose, consist of two classes; one, of those established by the Regents of the University by virtue of chapter 140 of the laws of 1834, and for the support of which the Regents appropriate four hundred dollars annually, a sum supposed to be equal to the expense of maintaining the department. The second class consists of those to which a share of the Literature Fund, equal to seven hundred dollars per annum, is distributed for their

ordinary support, and who are required by the Regents pursuant to the 9th section of chapter 237 of the laws of 1838, to establish and maintain departments for the instruction of common school teachers.

The following academies are in the first class:

Montgomery Academy,	..	Orange county.
Kinderhook do.	..	Columbia do.
Washington do.	..	Washington do.
Fairfield do.	..	Herkimer do.
St. Lawrence do.	..	St. Lawrence do.
Oxford do.	..	Chenango do.
Canandaigua do.	..	Ontario do.
Middlebury do.	..	Genesee do.

And the following are in the second class:

Erasmus Hall Academy,	Flathush, Kings county.
Amenia Seminary,	Amenia, Dutchess county.
Albany Female Academy,	Albany city.
Troy Female Academy,	Troy city.
Genesee Wesleyan Seminary,	Lima, Livingston county.
Cortland Academy,	Homer, Cortland county.
Ithaca Academy,	Ithaca, Tompkins county.

The following statement will exhibit the progress of these departments. In 1835 they were established, and the number of pupils has been annually as follows:

In 1835, 138	In 1838, 374
In 1836, 218	In 1839, 498
In 1837, 284	In 1840, 668

These numbers are far from indicating the aggregate of teachers prepared by these academies, as a large portion of those attending the classical department, have been employed as schoolmasters.

Desirous of knowing the practical operation of these departments, two gentlemen of eminent ability and peculiar qualifications for the task, were, during the past year, appointed by the Superintendent to visit such academies as their time and convenience would permit, for the purpose of personally examining the departments established in them, and reporting their condition. Particular subjects of inquiry were indicated to them, and they were desired to make such suggestions to instructors and pupils, as they deemed expedient. These gentlemen were Professor Potter of Union College, and David H. Little, Esq. of Cherry Valley, who generously devoted considerable time to the employment, and at their own expense visited several academies. Their reports are in the Appendix marked L, and are entitled to and will doubtless receive the most careful consideration. That of Prof. Potter, himself an able and accomplished teacher, for many years a close observer of the actual operation of our system, and one of the most devoted friends of primary education, is more extended, and contains many suggestions of a practical character for the benefit of instructors, and some profound and most valuable reflections upon the means of giving to our schools the greatest efficiency. Several improvements recommended by him, are within the competency of this department, and will be adopted, particularly those relating to the qualifications of pupils on entering the department, and the length of time they are to remain. Others are within the province of the Regents of the University.

From all the information received, the Superintendent is convinced that there has been a decided improvement in these departments. The standard of instruction in their vicinity has been raised, the desire for competent instructors has increased, their wages have advanced, the demand for them has augmented, and a general influence in favor of primary education, of the most salutary character, has been diffused.

In the judgment of the Superintendent these departments ought not to be abandoned, but should be sustained and encouraged, and the means for establishing a larger number in other academies, should be provided. They, with the other academies and with the colleges of the state, furnish the supply of teachers indispensable to the maintenance of our schools.

And the Superintendent would also respectfully renew the suggestion contained in his last annual report, to make it the interest of those who intend to become teachers, to avail themselves of these departments and schools, by a provision

that a certificate of qualification given by the trustees should constitute the person receiving it a qualified teacher in the common schools of the state, without the necessity of any further certificate from the inspectors of a town; but that the latter might annul such certificate for conduct affecting the moral character of the person holding it, subject to the usual right of appeal to the Superintendent. Such certificates, from the greater confidence that would be reposed in their value, would confer decided advantages on the holders, particularly in the greater facility with which they would obtain employment. Thus, those engaged in the honorable duties of teachers, would be induced to make the business a permanent and steady profession; others would emulate their attainments; neighboring districts would not rest contented with inferior qualifications in their schoolmasters; a higher standard of instruction and a more just compensation would certainly follow.

One model school or more, might be advantageously established in some central parts of the state, to which teachers and those intending to become such, might repair to acquire the best methods of conducting our common schools.

SCHOOL DISTRICT LIBRARIES.

It appears that the number of volumes in the libraries on the 31st December, 1840, was 422,459, and that there had been received and expended during that year for the purchase of books, \$94,998.56; which gives as the average expense of each volume, about 45 cents. From the information received at this office, it is believed that the selections have generally and almost universally been of useful and proper books. The three series published by the Messrs. Harper & Brothers, have been chiefly chosen, and it is believed that a better choice could not have been made. It is not to be expected that any collection of books will suit the taste of every individual. But the series referred to have been selected by competent persons for the express purpose of a district circulating library, and the unusual satisfaction they have given, is the best proof of the care which has been exercised. The subjects of the works were submitted to the Superintendent and approved by him; and although his duties would not allow an examination of their contents, yet the names of the persons consulted were communicated to him, and he invariably found that they were individuals whose characters justified the confidence reposed in them. Other collections have also been approved, upon application, or their defects pointed out. It was supposed, that in this way an acceptable service might be rendered to trustees of districts, whose literary habits or want of time would not allow them to make selections adapted to the purpose. It is proper to remark, that the same enterprising publishers are preparing a fourth series, and that it is their intention to supply the increasing demand by the best works in the English language, at prices much less than books were ever before furnished in this country.

It is impossible to contemplate the fruits already realized from this part of our system of public instruction, without the highest gratification. The circulation of half a million of valuable books, among our fellow-citizens, without charge and without price, is a greater benefaction to our race than would be the collection in any one place of ten times the number of volumes. And when we reflect that in five years there will be two millions of such books in free and constant circulation among those who most need them and who are most unable to procure them, whose minds will thus be diverted from frivolous and injurious occupations and employed upon the productions of the learned and wise of all ages, we shall find ourselves unable to set bounds to the mighty influences that will operate upon the moral and intellectual character of our State.

No philanthropist, no friend of his country and her glorious institutions, can contemplate these results, and the incalculable consequences they must produce, upon a population of nearly three millions of souls, without blessing a kind Providence for casting our lot where the cultivation and improvement of the human mind, are so eminent. ly the objects of legislative care, or without feeling that every citizen in his station is bound to forward the great work, until we are as intelligent, as we are free.

IMPROVEMENT OF COMMON SCHOOLS.

In reference to the improvement of the common schools, the Superintendent has various suggestions to make. But he would observe, that he cannot concur in the general and sweeping denunciations of our system or of its practical operation, in which some of our fellow citizens indulge themselves. As remarked by the Superintendent in his report for 1839, "the ardor of reformation runs into exaggerated representations of the abuses which it aims to overthrow;" and it may be added, that errors and omissions in the administration

of a system, are more easily discovered and promulgated, than remedied. It is not difficult to theorize on the subject of education; every man feels competent to the task of forming systems that work admirably on paper. But the practical difficulties of a subject that requires the co-operation of the whole community, and depends almost entirely on public sentiment, can be appreciated only by those who have experienced them, or who have attentively considered them.

Public instruction, like every other institution of our country, depends on the voluntary action of the people. Laws may be passed, and systems devised, but they will have no vitality until put in motion by those for whom and on whom they are to operate. Time is essential, not only to the full comprehension of any system on such a subject, but also to accommodate ourselves to its requirements, and to form those habits which are necessary to its complete execution. And in the enterprise of voluntary public instruction by a whole community, a generation may well be required to give it efficiency. Those who are impatient for that high degree of improvement which all hope will ultimately crown our efforts, incur the hazard of exciting despondency, when they overlook or depreciate what has been done, and represent the labor of twenty-five years as nugatory. Justice to the subject, as well as to those who have preceded us, requires that we should examine the authentic accounts of our progress, and ascertain what it really has been. In 1815, returns were received from 2,631 districts, in which there were 140,706 children instructed. In 1840, 10,397 districts sent in their reports showing that 572,995 children had attended their schools. In 1815, \$46,398 were paid from the Treasury towards defraying the compensation of teachers, and in 1840, \$220,000 were paid from the same source for the same purpose. By a previous statement, it appears that the people have contributed in taxes for the support of schools, \$275,000 00

And that they have voluntarily paid in sustaining them,

913,458 00

Making a total of

\$1,188,458 00

contributed by a population of 2,432,000, of whom probably not one-sixth were either taxed, or in any way called on to share in these expenses. A people who have thus freely expended their money, and appropriated their private means for the education of their children to an amount nearly double the expense of administering the government, cannot, with any truth or justice, be said to be indifferent to the subject. And when we find 30,000 trustees of school districts gratuitously rendering their services, and making their returns with order, regularity and promptitude, we ought not to deny their appreciation of the value of the labor in which they engage, nor their merit in performing it. It is no slight proof of the value of a system which is thus administered without compulsion. Its fruits are seen in the education of one-fourth of our entire population, and of nearly every child of a proper age for the primary schools; in the advance of the wages paid to teachers—a clear indication that a higher degree of talent is employed and appreciated; and in the interest almost universally excited among our fellow citizens of every class in the success of our efforts.

Still, like every other human institution, it is susceptible of constant improvement. This is not to be accomplished by sudden changes which derange the machinery, and which when effected will probably be found to require alteration; and least of all, by those schemes which are so comprehensive as to be incapable of practical execution. Amendments, when experience has indicated their necessity, may be gradually incorporated in the system without obstructing it. And the introduction of new elements, to aid, invigorate and sustain what we have, and in keeping with it, will be more likely to accomplish their purpose than if they were antagonistic to what is already established.

The great object of all our solicitude is the elevation of the standard of education. Although so many children are learning to read and write, and to cypher, yet with such means as are provided they ought to learn much more. How is this to be accomplished? In the opinion of the Superintendent, mainly by the action of public opinion, and to some, although a very limited extent, by legislation. The first requisite is the employment of teachers who can impart a greater amount

and a higher degree of instruction. That such are to be found in our state, no one can doubt. But they must be induced to present themselves by the same considerations which influence all men in their pursuits, the respectability of the employment and the certainty of adequate remuneration.

Both of these depend upon public sentiment. If the community be not awakened to a sense of the value and dignity of the vocation, and are not prepared to do it justice, no system of organization however perfect, and no amount of public beneficence expended on the schools, will call into action the requisite qualifications. Indeed, the bounty of government will retard if it do not paralyze those spontaneous efforts which spring from a conviction of their necessity. If the citizen supposes that the public treasury will provide the means of employing teachers, he will have no solicitude on the subject; and one of the great principles of human action implanted in the heart of man, that which places his affections where his treasure is, ceases to operate. He will abandon the care of the whole matter to those who have undertaken to provide for its expense.

SCHOOL JOURNAL.

Since neither systems, nor the direct application of public money, will rouse the community to the exertions necessary on their part, we have nothing left but to reach their minds by intelligent agitation, the great moving power of modern times. This is to be done by oral and printed communication. To accomplish this, legislation may render important aid. By sending a journal devoted exclusively to the interests of primary education, to every district, a knowledge may be diffused of the improvements constantly making in this and other countries, in the mode of instruction, in the adaptation of schoolhouses and their appendages, and in the text-books used by the pupils;—of the extent and amount of learning which may be derived from the judicious employment of the school hours, under the direction of competent teachers, and of the false economy which would waste money and precious time in the imperfect acquisition of even the elementary branches of education. It would be the means of communicating to trustees, teachers, and inhabitants of districts, the alterations in the common school laws, the regulations of the Superintendent, and the communications of this department on the subjects, many of them difficult, which are constantly presented for explanation or direction, and the various information essential to the correct discharge of their duties, and calculated to prevent litigation, vexatious if not ruinous, and to arrest disputes that too often prove fatal to the harmony and peace of a district. In Massachusetts, Connecticut and Michigan, journals of this kind have been established, and have produced the most salutary results. One undertaken in this state by a very capable and devoted friend to the cause, maintained at private expense, has been eminently serviceable wherever it has been circulated. The Superintendent can perceive from the correspondence of the office, in what counties and towns it has been read, and the effect of its distribution upon the usual topics of complaint and dispute. The knowledge that a point has been decided, has prevented controversy and the derangement of the school which usually follows.

The authority to subscribe to such a journal was earnestly recommended in the last report of the Superintendent, and the means of defraying the expense out of the residue of the income derived from the U. S. Deposit Fund, was suggested. That residue is now appropriated to the increase of the School Fund. The application of the small sum that would be required, \$2,500, would not be a diversion of the appropriation, but would promote its object, the improvement of the schools, infinitely more than the direct application of the money in any other mode. A large portion of that sum would be saved to the state in the expense of printing and promulgating the circulars and notices which issue from this department, and in diminishing the large amount of postage on its correspondence. The united testimony of the county visitors throughout the state, communications from the most enlightened and intelligent friends of education, and petitions from all quarters, confirm the propriety of some legislative provision on the subject.

LOCAL SUPERINTENDENTS.

The appointment of local superintendents, would also have

a most beneficial effect upon public sentiment. The information they could communicate, and the views they might present in public addresses, and the associations they might form, could not fail to imbue the public mind with the importance of good schools, and with the necessity of individual effort to sustain them. The whole subject would be made familiar to the people; they would come to understand that it was one in which they were most interested, and their zeal would be as effectually exerted as it has been by similar means, on other topics of social interest.

Weighty as these considerations are, in favor of local superintendents, there are others which are perhaps still more impressive. A regular supervision is indispensable to the success of every public or private undertaking. There is not a department of government which is not subject to some direct and immediate control, and no individual appoints an agent for the management of any business, without reserving and exercising a superintendence over him. Conscious of the absolute necessity of such a provision in the common school system, the framers of the law endeavored to secure it by the election of town inspectors. But the object has not been obtained. The official reports show to what extent even the duty of simple visitation has been neglected. And when the nature of these visitations is considered, it will be obvious that if they were as frequent as might be desired, they could not accomplish the great purpose in view. To be of any avail, the inspection of schools must be conducted by those who are competent to judge of the qualifications of the teacher, and of the progress of the pupils, by examinations in the different studies pursued, and to suggest such improvements and modifications as will enable the student to derive the greatest amount of benefit from the schools. And time must be devoted not only to the schools and their masters, but to the trustees and inhabitants. It is no disparagement to our fellow-citizens, usually chosen inspectors, to say that generally they have not themselves acquired the knowledge of the subject which is necessary to qualify them for the discharge of these duties; and it is very certain that they have not the time to bestow in their performance. As just and proper links connecting the schools with the people, and as useful auxiliaries to a county superintendent, the Superintendent is convinced upon further reflection, that they ought to be retained; and if they were chosen by trustees of districts, their election would be exempted from the influence of party politics and local controversies.

All writers on public education concur in the unanimous and decided opinion that effectual inspection and supervision are more essential to the proper management of schools, and more indispensable to their improvement, than any other agency, or all other agencies combined; and the Superintendent does not hesitate to express his conviction, that until they are provided, all efforts to improve the condition of the schools, to extend the range and elevate the character of the instruction in them, will be utterly hopeless; and he seriously apprehends that instead of advancing they will retrograde, and we shall lose much of what we now have. M. Cousin, the celebrated author on popular education, attributes the success of the schools in Holland almost entirely to the constant and unremitting inspection to which they are continually subjected, and demonstrates that wherever schools have failed in other countries to meet the public expectation in the degree and amount of instruction, it has been owing to the want of such supervision.

The appointment of county superintendents might be entrusted to the several boards of supervisors; and the compensation regulated by the Legislature, in proportion to the number of districts, might be paid partly by the county and partly by the state. A portion of the residue of the income arising from the United States Deposit Fund, after the annual appropriations for the support of schools and the purchase of libraries, cannot be better applied than to such a purpose. The policy of hoarding money to create a capital already sufficiently large, to be expended at some distant future time, when there is a present object of immediate urgency, vital, as it is believed, to the success of the whole enterprise, is not perceived.

The Report concludes with recommending several provisions to remedy defects in existing laws. These

will be found substantially on page 76, of this volume of the Journal. We extract, however, what is said respecting the

TUITION OF INDIGENT CHILDREN.

A provision that the tuition of indigent children shall be a charge on the district generally, instead of being assessed on those only who send to the school, is necessary to remedy a defect in the existing law. In the opinion of the Superintendent, our system now admirably combines the advantages of a free school with those of schools where tuition is paid for. The indigent, are silently, and without wounding their sensibility, exonerated from all expense, and yet, those who are able to pay, are relieved from all feeling of charitable dependence, by contributing very moderate sums for their instruction. All are brought on a level, and equally participate in the benefits of the best school to be had. But as this exemption is a common benefit, it should be a common burthen. If, as has been intimated in some quarters, the public money should first be applied to the payment of the tuition of the indigent, its effect would be to enhance the price to those, who, although not destitute, might feel the increased expense. And 'here would be some danger, that the exemptions by the trustees might be too much restricted, from the very natural desire to retain as much of the public money as possible, in reduction of their own rate bills. One of the evils of the existing law, is its tendency, in the same way, to prevent liberal exemptions. The most simple, direct and equitable mode is, to direct the amount, from the payment of which the indigent are exempted, to be raised in the same manner as the expense of building a schoolhouse.

The APPENDIX contains much valuable information.

EXTRACTS FROM PROF. POTTER'S REPORT

On the academic department for the education of common school teachers.

We would gladly insert the whole of this valuable document. It throws much light on the working of these institutions, and demonstrates, without perhaps intending it, the necessity of making more efficient provision for the education of teachers, than they now furnish.

DEPARTMENT FOR TEACHERS IN KINDERHOOK ACADEMY.

This Academy is under the charge of Silas Metcalf, Esq., who has been its principal for nearly fifteen years. He is one of a very small number among us who have persevered for so long a period in the arduous labors of a teacher. To show how few, in this country, engage even in the higher departments of instruction as a pursuit for life, Mr. M. mentioned in the course of my visit, that though well acquainted with most of the leading academies in this state, he knew but four or five principals who had been teachers for the space of fifteen years; and that he knew of no one, excepting himself, who had continued so long at the head of any one academy. It is worthy of remark, that the constant change of teachers so much complained of in respect to common schools, and the want of those who have acquired skill by practice, and who feel that interest in their pursuit, which they alone can feel who expect to make it permanent; that these evils are not confined to such schools, but prevail to no small extent in our higher seminaries, and I might add in all our professions. Having for several years been connected with an institution which supplies a large number of instructors to academies and classical schools, I have often had occasion to remark, that many of these seminaries change their principals annually, and that a large proportion of our higher schools are under the direction of those who have but recently engaged in teaching, and who pursue it mainly or exclusively as a convenient resource, while preparing for other professions. If this be the case with them, it is obvious that the practice must obtain much more extensively in common schools, where the rate of compensation is much lower, and where the pernicious custom of employing a male teacher in winter, and a female in summer, has the effect to deprive both of the prospect of steady employment, as well as of a fixed place of abode.

The academy at Kinderhook contains both a male and female department; and arrangements are made in each for

the admission of pupils who wish to become teachers. The average number of all the students in the academy is about one hundred and twenty. I cannot forbear here to notice a fact which first attracted my attention while visiting this academy, but which I met subsequently at the others. On referring to the annual catalogue of the academy I found that it gave the names of two hundred and seventy-four who had belonged to it in the course of the preceding year, and as the usual number attending at any one time had not exceeded half that amount, I inquired the reason of the apparent discrepancy. The reply was, that many of the pupils remained but a single term, and that hence the whole number of members within the year was always more than twice as great as the number at any one time. It is believed, that a similar remark might be made of a large proportion of those academies in the state, which do not depend upon cities or large towns for their pupils.

In judging of the influence which such a department has upon the preparation of teachers, it is not proper, I conceive, to refer only to the special instruction which the pupils may receive, in the art of teaching. It is necessary to revert to the fact, that example is more powerful than precept, and that in regard to the discipline of a school, as well as in regard to various methods of instruction, pupils are more likely to form their notions from what they see in practice, than from what they read in books or hear in lectures. Measured by this standard, the influence exerted on the members of the teachers' department at Kinderhook is believed to be salutary. The principal is indefatigable in endeavoring to inspire his pupils with sentiments of self-respect, as well as in cultivating habits of diligence and self-control. Mild in his manners, and patient both in communicating instruction, and in bearing with the perverse, he shows how much power lies in affection combined with firmness and assiduity. The result, as seen in the general condition of the academy, is highly encouraging. At the time of my visit, (July 28th,) a vacation of a few days was about to commence, and the exercises were in a great degree suspended. The utmost decorum however prevailed; and I observed in particular, that the walls of the school rooms, the sides of the academy building, and the fences, were neat and in order; thus showing, that the propensity to deface and destroy, so often rampant about our schoolhouses, had been charmed down, and that the pupils had been taught to respect alike, themselves, the property of the trustees, and the feelings of their instructor. Such a system of discipline cannot but inspire those who daily observe its workings and feel its influence, with many salutary impressions in regard to the duties of a teacher; and I was assured by one or two of the pupils, that they had derived much advantage from adopting a similar plan in district schools.

As the state in which I found the academy did not admit of a formal examination, I contented myself with conversing with some of the pupils in each branch of the department for teachers, and obtaining from the principal an exposition of his views, in relation to this mode of training teachers. The number in attendance at that time was about twelve, of whom one half were females. The average attendance is about fifteen, with the same relative proportion of males and females, except that the former are more numerous in summer, the latter in winter. The number in actual attendance at any one time, should be distinguished from the whole number who may have been members of the department in the course of the year.

In regard to the age of those entering this department, and the period of continuance in it, I gathered from Mr. M. the following facts. Those who enter for the express purpose of qualifying themselves to teach, are usually from 18 to 21 years, the young men being somewhat more advanced than the young ladies. Members of this description have usually taught school from one to three quarters before entering. They rarely come with the intention of remaining during the three years' course contemplated by the Regents, and do not, on an average, actually continue much more than two terms of four months each. These two terms are rarely taken in immediate succession. The prevailing practice is, to enter and remain through the whole or greater part of one term, then take a school for three or four months, and then return to the academy for another term. In some cases, they con-

tinue longer; in others, they come at first but for one term; and in others, they leave after the expiration of that period, intending to return, but do not. The impression of Mr. M. on the whole, was, that the average continuance of the students was about *one-third* of the time originally proposed by the Regents of the University.

In regulating the *studies* of pupils in this department, the principal finds it difficult to adhere to the *course* at first prescribed. As the members of the department recite with the regular classes of the academy, they are apt to conceive a strong preference for some new study, to which their former classmates are about to be advanced. Another difficulty is, that having at the academy an opportunity, which they do not expect to enjoy elsewhere, of gaining some knowledge of a modern or an ancient language, or of some of the higher branches of mathematics, and feeling that the possession of such knowledge will enhance the estimation in which they are held, not only as teachers, but in any other pursuit, they are extremely anxious to embrace such opportunity. Thus I conversed with a young lady, in the female branch of the department who was studying Latin and French. She had taught a district school for a quarter or more; after spending a few months in the academy, she proposed taking another school for a time, and then hoped to go to the Rutgers Institute, in New York, to complete her education. Her plans for life were not yet formed; she might teach possibly for life, but it was quite apparent, and indeed frankly admitted, that she did not anticipate pursuing the vocation in a common school. I also conversed with two young gentlemen, who appeared to be very estimable and intelligent persons. One of them had been nearly prepared to enter college, but his health being impaired, he had engaged in teaching in the western part of the state, and was now at the academy, pursuing German and French. He expected to resume the employment of an instructor, at no distant day, but was undecided how long he should pursue it, and especially how long he should be content to have charge of a district school. The other, was an enterprising young man, who after spending twelve weeks in the teachers' department, had taken a school in the vicinity, which he had taught with much success. He had now returned to the academy to qualify himself still further, and I found him studying Virgil. He assured me that he was pleased with the employment, and that after spending another term under Mr. M. he expected to resume it, and to make it the business of his life. I did not express to him the apprehension which, after some years of intimate intercourse with young men, I could not but feel, that some of the acquirements for which he was striving, would hardly contribute to his happiness or usefulness in a common school, and that he would be tempted ere long, to carry them to another theatre. In countries like Prussia or Holland, where society is settled, and where the position of the teacher is fixed by usage as well as law, I can fully appreciate the importance of giving him some knowledge of modern and ancient languages, though the study of them is never allowed, I believe, to interfere with the most thorough training in those branches which he will be called more especially to teach. But in this country, where all employments are open, and where so many attractions are presented by other pursuits, the training of common school teachers must, I apprehend, be confined, still more carefully, to the more primary branches, unless we would render them discontented with the toils and self-denials of their profession.

Having been particularly requested in your letter of instructions, to ascertain how many of the pupils who have been instructed in these departments have subsequently devoted themselves to the business of teaching, I requested Mr. M. to favor me in this particular with all the information in his possession. It may be proper to remark here, that a department for preparing teachers was established in the Kinderhook Academy sometime previous to 1834, when they were first established by law; and that the principal has consequently had the best opportunities of observing the effects of the system. From some of the facts already mentioned, you will not be surprised to learn that his representations in this respect were not altogether encouraging. From its establishment to this time, there have probably been 130—140 members in the department, of whom not less than 100 have

finally left. Of this number he can recall but very few who, having left two years or more, are now teaching. He doubts whether there are ten such, particularly whether that number or the half of it can now be found engaged in *common school* teaching. The student enters the department disposed to teach and not unwilling to take a district school. But he associates with those who expect soon to repair to college, or to enter at once on a course of professional study, or whose views are directed towards select and classical schools, as teachers of which they can command wages nearly twice as great as those usually paid to instructors of common schools. Some with whom he meets commenced study as late in life as himself—are like him without property—and perhaps like him aspired no higher at first than to the charge of a common or select English school. But their plans are changed, and in the spirit of self-independence which distinguishes our young men, they are about to make their way through college, or to strike at once for some lucrative post in engineering or at the bar. He catches the contagion of their example, and in spite of all the influence which his teacher can apply, he betakes himself to studying the languages and the higher mathematics. Even of those who pursue the course of study prescribed by the Regents, but few are reconciled to the prospect of teaching common schools permanently; and after an experience of more than ten years, Mr. M. seemed to have been brought reluctantly to the conclusion, that these departments contribute but little to the formation of a *permanent class* of teachers.

I should, however, do great injustice to his views if I left you with the impression that Mr. M. supposes the system to have failed in accomplishing its principal object. On the contrary, he mentioned a number of facts which appear to prove that, though it may not have produced the precise result anticipated at the time of its establishment, it has still exerted a powerful and salutary influence on the condition of our schools. He stated, for instance, that he had always more applications for teachers than he could supply; and that teachers going from their academy always receive higher wages than those who had not enjoyed similar advantages. He also stated that members of the department who after spending a term or more with him, had gone out, taught for a while and then returned, invariably improved more rapidly during a second than during their first term of residence. He had frequently occasion to observe, moreover, that the attention of young persons was first drawn to the business of teaching, by hearing of the existence or operations of this department; that school districts were, by the same means, apprized of the means and induced to consider the great importance of employing better qualified teachers; and that it serves in various ways to keep before the public mind the claims of primary education. It is also worthy of remark, in this connection, that many of the pupils of this department, however imperfectly trained for the office of teaching, are yet better qualified than they could have been without its aid; that, commanding, in virtue of their superior qualifications, higher wages, they will be more likely to continue as teachers; and that in all the relations of life they will be found, in consequence of the opportunities of improvement afforded by the department, more enlightened and more useful.

It is proper to add that the students in this department are not exercised in teaching. They receive some special instruction however in regard to both its theory and practice. The library is well supplied with books on education, and besides encouraging the pupils to read for themselves, the principal is accustomed to take up some such work as *Abbott's Teacher* in their presence and to read it with copious remarks of his own. Lectures are given occasionally, and with the aid of a good apparatus, on some of the principles of natural science. Particular instruction is also given in penmanship and English grammar; and I am happy to add, that pains are taken to exercise all the students of this academy in *reading aloud*, an accomplishment in respect to which many of our schools are culpably remiss.

Students in the teachers' department, if indigent, pay but half the usual rate of tuition.

FAIRFIELD ACADEMY.

In this department, the trustees and principal have endeavored to confine the students to the *studies* prescribed, but not with entire success. Out of seventeen whom I examined, I

found eight engaged in studying algebra, which is not one of the branches prescribed by the Regents. I also found several studying natural philosophy, trigonometry and surveying; but no one who was studying the history of the United States, chemistry, moral or political philosophy. Something more than one-half of the whole number whom I examined had already been in charge of schools; some of them for two or more winters. Nearly all of them expect to resume the business of teaching. Some proposed to be absent for that purpose the ensuing winter, and would then return to the department. Others expected to leave finally to take schools, but for what period, they had not determined. It was but too evident from their manner as well as from their course of study, that they might aspire to a class of schools yielding more emolument than most district schools, and that few of them looked forward to teaching as a permanent pursuit.

It is proper to mention, that in one or two instances I found pupils pursuing only those branches, a knowledge of which is required for admission.

One fact was deeply impressed upon my mind while conversing with the young men in this department, and which I had frequent occasion to recur to at the other academies. When their attainments were measured by the standard of strict scholarship, there was in many instances, much deficiency, especially in some of the common branches of a district school education. But when the same individuals were examined in regard to their capacity and disposition for *self-improvement*, their range of thought and information, and their habits of mental activity, they evinced powers, which I could not but regard with pride and pleasure. The influence of our civil institutions in awakening mind, in inspiring sentiments of self-respect and self-reliance, in promoting a spirit of inquiry, and especially in teaching us the great but most difficult art of governing ourselves that we may govern others; all this was strikingly apparent in most of these young men. Some of them I questioned in respect to their mode of managing schools, and found them well aware of the necessity of relying on moral influence, and of cultivating among their pupils those habits of self-government which would fit them to become worthy citizens of the republic. Located as this department is, in the midst of a farming district, where the habits of the people are simple, and where the young men have been taught, both by precept and example, to form exalted notions of the dignity and responsibility of a teacher of common schools, it has contributed, I think, materially to the improvement of those schools. Select schools are less numerous in its vicinity than in many other parts of the state; and though young men, trained in the department, may not, in many instances, devote themselves permanently to teaching, yet it is worthy of consideration, that while engaged in studying, they are also at intervals employed as teachers in the neighboring schools, thus combining theory and practice; that by this means they are more likely to improve as teachers than the ordinary students of an academy, since their attention is more frequently and pointedly directed to the subject by their instructors, as well as by the fact that they belong to this department; and that when they finally leave it, they carry with them the conviction, that they are bound in good faith, to teach for one or two winters. Special pains have been taken, I am assured, to impress upon them their duty in this respect. It may be a question whether more care should not be taken to point out to them the duty of taking a common, rather than a select school, since it was to improve the former, especially, that the departments were established.

OXFORD ACADEMY.

A department was established at an early period and has been sustained with increasing interest. That the principal may have leisure to devote to it more of his time and attention, he has employed an additional classical instructor, of high qualification, to whom he feels no hesitation in committing his advanced classes. He thus gains leisure to take up the young men who have just entered, especially those joining the teachers' department, to ascertain by personal examination their habits and attainments, and to give, by these means, the most advantageous direction to their studies. By this arrangement, instead of being regarded as an unimportant appendage to the academy, the department becomes an object of prominent interest; and the members of it enjoy the

best training which their previous acquirements and the limited time which they usually pass in studying will allow. To some extent, they actually practice teaching, under the inspection of the principal. They have also various exercises intended to make them familiar with the principles of the art. Of this kind are, 1st, Lectures on the general theory of teaching; 2nd, On the best method of teaching each branch usually pursued in common schools; 3rd, On the best method of organizing classes so as to save time, and secure to each pupil the greatest amount of instruction; 4th, Discussions among the young men, in presence of the principal, on questions previously assigned, respecting government, mode of instruction, moral influence, &c. These are found to awaken much interest, and to afford the principal a favorable opportunity for developing his own views. Young men are also encouraged to read the best writers on education, the library being supplied with works of that description.

Several facts mentioned to me incidentally, during my visit, will serve to show that the establishment and maintenance of this department has been an object of much interest in that part of the state; and that many of its pupils carry from it lasting feelings of respect and gratitude. The principal stated, that he frequently receives letters from those who have left the department and are now teaching, asking his advice in respect to some nice, and to them, embarrassing case of discipline or instruction; and that trustees of districts, also, knowing his interest in the welfare and improvement of common schools, not only apply to him to provide them a teacher, but also submit for his consideration, points, which may have occupied the attention or divided the opinions of the employers. It is obvious that such a relation between academies and common schools is much to be desired, as tending to bind together all the parts of our system of public instruction, and as contributing especially to the elevation of common schools. The active but not ungenerous emulation which prevails among the various academies of the state, is a pledge that a relation which has thus been established in one case, and which reflects so much, both of credit and advantage on the parties, will be cultivated by kindred institutions in other parts of the state. It is also worthy of remark, that the increase in the rate of wages paid to common school teachers, which has been observed throughout the state, for the last five years, is very evident and striking in the vicinity of this department. I also learned by conversing with those members in it, who had been engaged in teaching, that they almost invariably found that the *younger* children in the school were more advanced, in proportion to their age and opportunities than the older ones. This would seem to show that the advantages afforded by these schools, within the last three or four years, *i. e.* since the influence of the department began to be felt, have been greater than formerly; and the same inference may be clearly drawn from a fact stated by Mr. McKoon. He mentioned that when the department was first opened, young men who came to it from common schools rarely knew any thing of grammar or geography; recently *all* are more or less acquainted with those branches. I was also informed, by some of the young men, that they had been first induced to think of teaching, and especially of improving their qualifications, by hearing (at the distance in one case of 40 miles) of a department which had been established for the special benefit of persons in their situation.

It is in these respects, I conceive, rather than in providing a *permanent* class of good teachers, that these departments contribute to improve common schools. Out of 16 whom I examined, I found but *two* who intended to make teaching their profession; and but *one* who proposed to devote himself for life, to the charge of a district school. Most of them proposed to teach the ensuing winter—perhaps longer; but their plans for the future were evidently unsettled. It has been the experience of Mr. McKoon, as of Mr. Metcalf, that those who first came to the department merely to qualify themselves to teach a common or select school in the country, had, in some cases, been led to change their plans by associating with those who were preparing for college, or by discovering with what ease they could qualify themselves to become assistant engineers, or to commence professional studies. Since he has had charge of the academy, from 200 to 250 have gone out from it to take schools; but of this large number, probably not one in twenty continue to teach more than two winters. Of

those who left the institution four years since or more, he could recollect less than *ten* who were still teachers of common schools.

SUMMARY OF THE ADVANTAGES GROWING OUT OF THESE DEPARTMENTS.

- I. The students in these departments make good proficiency in their studies, but pursue the higher branches to the neglect of those which are elementary.
- II. They remain at the institutions but about one-third of the time originally contemplated.
- III. They are not generally exercised in teaching in the presence of their instructors; most of them, however, have taught common schools.
- IV. They usually expect to teach after leaving the department, but not for a long time.
- V. The departments have contributed indirectly but materially, to the improvement of common schools, viz.:
 1. They have led employers to consider the importance of having better qualified teachers.
 2. They notify trustees where they may apply for teachers.
 3. They create an intimate and salutary connection between academies and common schools.
 4. They multiply the number of persons who make teaching a temporary pursuit, and render such persons better qualified for their duties.
 5. They increase the number of better informed citizens, especially of such as will take an interest in common schools, and make good inspectors.
 6. They make it the interest of all academies to give more attention to the preparation of common school teachers.

DEFECTS, &c.

- I. Such as are *inherent* in the plan of engrafting a department for training teachers on any other seminary, and which of course, in the present instance, do not admit of remedy.
- II. Such as are merely *incidental* to existing arrangements, and which may be corrected by experience.

Of the *first* class are the making the teachers' department a *secondary* object—the associating of the pupils of the department with others, by which they are diverted from the intention of teaching, and are precluded from the cultivation of the requisite *esprit du corps*, and the impossibility of giving the best direction to the studies of the pupils, and more especially of allowing them sufficient opportunity for practice.

In regard to the other class of defects, experience seems to have taught that the term of three years, originally prescribed for the course in the teachers' department, is too long, and might with advantage be reduced one-third, if not one-half; that the terms of admission ought to be somewhat relaxed as to amount, and then more rigidly enforced; that the course of studies ought to be so altered as to render it imperative on every student to pursue the common English branches by way of review after he enters the department, and also to pay more attention to history and the first principles of political ethics and less to mathematics; that in order to increase the number of students in these departments, as well as to induce them to continue their studies longer and to give common schools a stronger claim upon their regard, they should be subjected to no charge for tuition or use of text-books; that a diploma from the department ought to supersede, in their case, the necessity of an annual examination before inspectors; and that an absolute promise should be exacted from those who have been in the department more than two terms, that on finally leaving it, they will teach a common school for the space of at least eight months. I would also suggest that the annual allowance made to these departments might with advantage be increased on condition that they remit all tuition fees, and provide more fully for accomplishing the objects proposed; that a plan, which has been suggested, of substituting *four* departments with much larger allowances for the *eight* established under the law of 1834, is not unworthy of regard; and that each department ought to be annually visited and inspected.

The principal evil connected with our present means of training teachers is, that they contribute to supply instructors for *select*, rather than for *common* schools; and that for want of special exercises, they perform even that work imperfectly. I would suggest whether some means might not be adopted

for training a class of teachers with more especial reference to country common schools, and to primary schools in villages and cities—teachers whose attainments should not extend much beyond the common English branches, but whose minds should be awakened by proper influence—who should be made familiar by practice with the best modes of teaching, and who should come under strong obligations to teach for at least two or three years. In Prussia and France, normal schools are supported at the public expense; most of the pupils receive both board and tuition gratuitously; but at the close of the course, they give bonds to refund the whole amount received, unless they teach under the direction of the government for a certain number of years. That such schools, devoted exclusively to the preparation of teaching, have some advantage over any other method, is sufficiently apparent from the experience of other nations; and it has occurred to me that as *supplementary* to our present system, the establishment of one in this state, might be eminently useful. If placed under proper auspices, and located near the capitol, where it could enjoy the supervision of the Superintendent of Common Schools, and be visited by the members of the Legislature, it might contribute in many ways to raise the tone of instruction throughout the state. A course of *one year*, divided between study and exercises in model schools, would be sufficient to qualify the pupils for the particular kind of teaching in view; and they would then carry the awakening influence of their instructions and example to the very districts in which it is most needed. To show how much can be accomplished in a brief space of time by such a system of training, I beg leave to insert the following extract from the minutes of evidence taken about three years since, before a committee of the House of Lords, (England) in regard to the national school system for Ireland. It is from the examination of the Rev. Eugene Congdon.

"What kind of schoolmaster have you? I have one who has been instructed under the Board; and that schoolmaster has been of such use to me that I find the greatest possible advantage, satisfaction and comfort with his services. I have put other teachers, male and female, under his tuition for some time, and he has prepared them in the same manner that he has been himself prepared, and thereby I find the business of the schools carried on very well.

"Was he educated in the model school of the National Board in Dublin? He was there for three months.

"Do you think he was much improved by that education? He has been improved so far that it is a matter of astonishment to me how children, from the lowest ignorance of nature, almost, are in three quarters of a year, under his tuition, not only able to spell and write, but absolutely able to calculate with as much precision and accuracy as persons that have been for years at school before.

"Where was he brought up? When I got permission from the Board to send a person forward for tuition, I advertised for persons that would be fit and proper. A number presented themselves. I selected this man, of the name of Casey. I sent him to Dublin, and he returned to me afterwards with the approbation of the Board, and with a token of their kindness, in giving him some books.

"Is Ballyduff school in your district? It is.

"Is it a good school? He is master of it; and I do not think there is in Ireland a better working school. I suppose at this moment he has above 300 boys in the school. It is a mountainous district, situated between the towns of Lismore and Fermoy and Tallow."

When it is considered that teaching is an art, and that both its practice and principles may be acquired, under proper tuition more rapidly and more perfectly than in any other way, it becomes evident that a seminary devoted to this work, and under the direction of those who, to the requisite attainments and skill, add a deep and untiring interest in the object, might be of incalculable service. It is believed, that such a seminary, capable of sending forth one hundred teachers annually, might be sustained for five years at an expense of not more than sixty thousand dollars, or twelve thousand dollars annually; and that the graduates might be dispersed throughout the state, and having been trained solely at its expense, might, by judicious regulations be enlisted in teaching common schools for a period sufficiently long at least to enable

them to repay to the public the benefit which they have received. Within five years, the relative value of the system might be clearly tested, and ulterior measures be taken accordingly.

Since the above extracts were in type, we have received the *Report of the Superintendent of Common Schools transmitting abstracts of the Reports of the County Visitors, February 26, 1841.*

The reports of the county visitors show conclusively that the schools of New York labor substantially under the same evils which have been pointed out in the schools of Connecticut, viz. defective schoolhouses, too many, or too few scholars, too great a variety of ages, studies and books, constant change of teachers, and those not always qualified, the want of a vigorous inspection on the part of committees, and of a generous and intelligent parental co-operation. But we cannot make any extracts at this time on any of these points. We can only add a brief notice of the public schools of

GENEVA.

Extract from the Report of the County Visitors for Ontario County.

The degraded condition of the district schools of Geneva, forced upon it the necessity of providing for their improvement. Two plans were urged; the one for a farther subdivision of the village, the other for the union of its districts and the organization of a village public school. The latter prevailed, and a spacious brick building was erected. At this time, the average attendance at the district schools had been about 120, and idleness, profanity and obscenity, were rife in these nurseries of freemen. Now the daily attendance is 310, and a more orderly, industrious and happy school, cannot be found in the land. The children are separated into four departments, and are taught by seven teachers, five of whom are females. It is no longer a disgrace, but a privilege to attend the district school; children of all conditions here meet on common ground, and learn those great lessons of toleration and brotherhood which the factitious distinctions of after life can never wholly obliterate. It is, in fact, democracy's own institution, where merit alone makes distinction. And is it not important, that all our schools should be of this description? Secure to them supervision, and you will secure the same results. The teacher of this school was offered a private seminary and large salary, with infinitely less responsibility, but he refused to leave those who *trust* and *respect* him. The sympathy of the public has made the district school a post of honor.

Here also we found music cultivated with the happiest influence on the manners and dispositions of the children. An occasional song cheers on the working hours, and a hymn closes the duties of the day. There is no drudgery, no weariness; these simple melodies soften and subdue the rudest spirits, diffusing the kindest feelings, and cherishing the purest tastes, making discipline easy, and labor a pleasure. No one can witness its power without wishing that here, as in Germany, it was cultivated in every public school. And it might be so now, not perhaps scientifically; but the smallest district affords some one skilled to lead the infant choir. If merely its influence on the health were appreciated, it would soon be made a part of education in every school in the country.

BUFFALO.

Third Annual Report of the Superintendent of Common Schools of the city of Buffalo, February, 1840. pp. 13.

We are indebted to the former Superintendent, O. G. Steele, Esq. for copies of this interesting document. We hope to receive a copy of the report for the present year in time to lay before our readers, for we regard the experiment of bringing all the schools of a city under the constant supervision of one man devoting his whole time to the business, as one of general interest, and worthy of general adoption in the cities of this State.

Buffalo is divided into fifteen school districts, in each of which a trustee, a clerk, and collector are elected. There is

in addition a local superintendent for the city who receives an annual salary. We glean the following statistics from this report.

In 1837 when the new system appears to have commenced, the total number of children taught in all the public schools was 679; in 1838, 1149; and in 1839, 2450. The total amount of money paid for salaries of teachers is \$7,839 83, of which \$1,585 18 was received from the State Treasury, and \$6,254 65 was raised by city tax.

In the summer of 1838 the project of making the public schools free was first suggested, and at one of the public meetings held to discuss the matter, a committee from each ward was appointed to ascertain the number of schools of all descriptions in the city, the attendance and expense of instruction in each. The result was that the number of children in all the schools, public and private, was 1,424, and the amount expended was \$19,094, being \$13 41 per year, or \$3 35 per scholar for each quarter.

The total number of scholars who were taught in the public schools alone in 1839, was 2,450, at a saving of \$11,254 to the city. The whole number of persons over 5 and under 16 was 3463. Many of the most successful and respected teachers of private schools in 1838, are now employed in the public schools. And these schools are pronounced by the superintendent as equal to any set of schools ever in operation in the city.

In 1839, the sum of \$12,800 was levied to erect school-houses in five districts alone. The Superintendent remarks:

The great importance of having universal education at all times coequal with universal suffrage, must be obvious to every reflecting mind; and the doctrine, that the property of the country should pay for the education of the people thereof, may justly be adopted as the only safe and true policy for the country to adopt. The property holder, in paying the per centage upon his property required to disseminate universal education among the people, pays but a trifling premium for the insurance of the increased stability and protection of his property, and the permanence of the institutions under which it was accumulated.

The system now in operation, has thus far succeeded beyond the most sanguine hopes of its projectors and friends—its good effects are already apparent, from the anxiety to obtain admission into the schools, the prompt and constant attendance of the children, and their correct and orderly deportment while under the authority of the teachers. Its general good effects upon the character of our active population, cannot but be in the highest degree beneficial, and the benefits to be hereafter derived from it, will be in exact proportion with the support and countenance which it may receive from the city authorities, and an enlightened community. The system adopted is the only one which can successfully bring home the benefits of education equally to all; and the only question is, whether the thousands of children in this city shall be educated by means of the free schools, or whether a large majority shall grow up in ignorance and vice, and thus become a source of expense under our criminal statutes.

In 1839, nine hundred and fifty volumes were purchased under the library law of the State, and the number of volumes drawn weekly averaged over 350, and was constantly increasing. The results of the library in diffusing general information, and in fostering a taste for reading, are most gratifying.

CITY OF NEW YORK.

The following account of the public schools of New York city, is abridged from a communication of the Rev. Samuel Ward, to the Third Publication of the Central School Society, England.

The public schools in the city of New York are on a different footing from those in the other parts of the State. In the year 1805, on the petition of De Witt Clinton, and other benevolent individuals, a bill was passed by the State Legislature, constituting a body corporate for the establishment and management of public schools in the city. They elect their successors on the second Monday in May in each year, and their number has been gradually augmented till it now amounts to one hundred. At their first meeting after the annual election the trustees are divided into school sections, one section being attached to each public school-house, of which there are sixteen for white, and two more for colored children. They appoint a paid agent, who takes charge of the general depository of books, stationery, &c. and distributes the supplies to the schools, as they apply for them, once a week. At the same meeting there are also appointed an executive committee, a primary school committee, a finance committee, and oth-

ers. The executive committee appoint the teachers and monitors of the several schools, with such salaries as they may think proper, not exceeding such limits as the board of trustees may have sealed; and on the application of a section or otherwise, they may remove a teacher and appoint another in his place. It is their duty to visit and carefully examine all the schools annually, and to report to the board of trustees, on their general state; but with respect to the primary schools, this duty may be omitted at their discretion. They have also to prepare the annual report, and to examine all books proposed to be introduced into the schools. It is the duty of each section to attend to the interest of the schools to which it is attached, to examine them from time to time, and to make a quarterly report upon their state to the board of trustees: in conjunction also with the primary school committee, and a consulting committee of ladies, they are required to inspect and regulate the primary schools in their own neighborhood.

There are, as has been mentioned above, sixteen public school-houses. These are handsome brick buildings, containing two large rooms, one on the ground floor, and another above, appropriated to the pupils of the respective sexes. In ten out of the sixteen there is also a primary department for younger children, kept in the basement story; and there are besides, forty-five primary schools distinctively so called, taught in hired rooms, frequently the basement story of churches; there are also seven schools (two public and five primary) for the children of the Blacks. The rooms in which the higher departments of the public schools are taught are light, airy, and commodious; and where the arrangement is complete, they have two smaller apartments attached to the larger for the use of separate classes. In most of them the Eastern and Western Hemispheres, six feet in diameter, are painted in strong colors on the wall; in some is added a representation of the solar system, or of the eclipses; and most, if not all, of the schools are furnished with libraries. Nor let me omit to state, that the apartments, especially those in the primary schools, are kept beautifully clean, chiefly by the use of fine white sand, which is sprinkled on the floors.

These schools are all taught on a modification of the monitorial system, there being always one or more paid teachers and monitors to assist the principal. Thus, in Public School No. 3, in the boys' department, with three hundred and sixty-four on the list, and an average attendance of about three hundred, there is a head-master with a salary of about 1000 dollars, a second master with seven hundred, and a first monitor with two hundred, and a second with fifty: in the primary department in the same building, where I found two hundred and fifty children present, there were four teachers, all females, with salaries of 250, 200, 75† and 50† dollars. The teachers in all these schools are required to make quarterly and annual reports of the number of children admitted and discharged, the actual attendance, and other particulars; and no alteration can be made in the system or discipline of the school without the sanction of the board of trustees.

In order to provide a sufficient supply of efficient monitors, a school is opened in which the young female teachers and monitors receive additional instruction on the Saturday morning; and there is one for the young men and boys, taught on five evenings in every week during winter, and on Saturday mornings during the rest of the year.

In the primary schools, the method adopted is a modification of the infant school system, and as far as I had the opportunity of judging, it is efficiently applied. In the higher departments the course of instruction for boys embraces spelling, reading (including definitions and questions concerning the meaning of the author;) writing, making and mending of pens; arithmetic, geography, the use of the globes, and drawing maps; English grammar, composition, and declamation; book-keeping, the elements of history, astronomy, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry. The course of instruction for the girls is the same with the exception of declamation, algebra, geometry, and trigonometry, and with the addition of needle-work.

In the annual report, for 1837, it is remarked that "the constitution of the society and public sentiment wisely forbid the introduction into these schools of any such religious instruction as shall favor the views of any sect; and the trustees endeavor so carefully to guard them in this respect, as to give no just cause of complaint, leaving this subject where it rightly belongs, to the parents and guardians of the children. They wish, however, not to be understood as regarding religious impressions in early life as unimportant; on the contrary, they desire to do all which may with propriety be done, to give a right direction to the minds of the children entrusted to their care. Their schools are uniformly opened with the reading of the Scriptures, and the class books are such as to recognize and enforce the great and generally acknowledged principles of Christianity. A large proportion of our scholars attend the various Sunday Schools of the city, by direction of their parents; and the trustees are happy to bear testimony to their great usefulness, believing them to be very valuable auxiliaries to the cause of public instruction."

The poor appear to avail themselves of the means of education so far as provided for them, for I found most of the schools full; and they would have no excuse for not doing so, since the advantage is

offered them entirely without cost: they pay nothing either for the instruction itself, or for the books or other school materials which are required.

These schools derive their quota from the general school fund of the state; but the main part of their support is derived from a tax of a twentieth of one per cent. on the assessed value of the real and personal estate within the city and county. The account presented in July, 1837, shows 13,668 dollars to have been received by the school commissioners from the State, the same sum from the city, and 72,651 dollars from the tax just named, and of this gross sum 92,730 dollars were appropriated to the Public School Society.

The following extracts are from the *Thirty-fifth Annual Report of the Trustees of the Public School Society, 1840.*

Average attendance in public schools as reported by commissioners of common schools for 1840, 22,955
Attendance on the 1st of May 1840, 18,583

	Boys.	Girls.
" viz. in 14 Boys' School, white,	4357	
14 Girls',		3459
2 Boys' and Girls' schools,	479	119
12 Primary Departments,	1690	1432
46 Primary schools,	2681	2941
2 Boys' Schools, colored,	335	
2 Girls',		288
1 Primary Department do.	69	78
5 Primary schools, do.	160	268

Besides 451 children under 4 years of age.

Salaries of teachers, assistants and monitors,	\$64,219.00
Agent, visitors, &c.	2,500.00
Books, stationery,	14,396.02
Supplies for workshop, &c.	8,193.46
Buildings and lots,	45,840.38
Aggregate expenditure for 1840,	172,280.93

The trustees regret that their applications to the corporation for compulsory enactments, which might convert the poor vagrant children who throng our streets and wharves, into happy public school scholars, have been unsuccessful; but they indulge a hope, that though at first view, such measures may appear to be adverse to our political institutions, an examination of the subject will shew, that the good of the community requires that exercise of authority, and that it will yet be deemed expedient.*

It would add materially to the satisfaction of the Board, were they enabled, by an annual enlargement of their revenue, to provide opportunity for instruction to the rapidly increasing population of our city. In procuring through the aid of their more enlightened fellow citizens, the grant of a "tax of four-eighths of one per cent. on the assessed value of the real and personal estate of the city and county" for the support of common school education in this city, the Board supposed they had secured ample provision for their purpose. The common council having construed the law as limited to a fixed valuation, and not as progressive in amount, these just expectations, have been disappointed, and the trustees will be compelled, in a measure, to sit with folded hands, while many sections of our city are in want of schools, which cannot be provided for them. Repeated applications for an addition to the amount raised, have not met a favorable response from the common council. It is however to be hoped, that the increasing interest manifested by the community in the public schools, will ere long bring about a more favorable state of things, and as in a neighboring city, (Boston) a sum may be annually provided by tax for their support to such an amount as this Board may deem necessary.

The Board presume it may be satisfactory to their fellow citizens to learn, that in addition to the many thousand visits of supervision and examination paid by the trustees individually, or in their capacity as school committees to the public and primary schools, twice in each year, every public school is visited and examined by the whole Board or executive committee, running through a period of nearly five weeks for each. The primary schools, also, are visited and examined twice a year, by a large and vigilant standing committee.

A primary department has also been commenced at the Long Island Farm school. The early age at which children are apprenticed from that establishment, rendered it desirable that their education should also begin early.

Through the kindness of the faculties of Columbia College and the New York University, the Board continues to enjoy the privilege of sending gratuitously, several pupils to those institutions, as well as a number to the grammar schools under their care. During the past year only six pupils have been placed in them. The trustees of the Rutgers Female Institute have also liberally offered to receive, on similar conditions, six girls whose parents may wish their education carried beyond the branches taught in our schools.

*The trustees have bought and built a number of the primary school houses, 2 stories of 13 feet high and about 23 by 42 or 48 feet deep.

†Monitors.

*It has been ascertained for several years that from 90 to 30,000 children are in no school public or private.

† During the past year 11,844 visits have been made by the trustees to the public and primary schools under their care.

MODE OF TRAINING TEACHERS.

Extract from a letter.—We have always thought it desirable to supply the institution with teachers from the ranks of its own scholars. This has already been in some degree accomplished—we have one hundred and fifty principals and assistant teachers, and one hundred and forty eight teaching monitors under pay. In one hundred and two departments, about forty of the principals and assistants in the primary and upper public schools, were educated in the schools; and of the one hundred and forty eight monitors, nearly all of them. Among the monitors is a class of the grade of "past monitors" who are examined by the appointing committee before they attain that post in the schools. We have experienced no disappointment in those who have been promoted in the schools. They are active, industrious, and attentive, and understanding the system well, can be abundantly more serviceable. We have constant application from every quarter, and of course occasionally fill vacancies from those applicants who are required first to spend at least six weeks in our schools, that they may learn our system, and the committee have a better opportunity thereby of judging of their competency. All, however, previous to being appointed, are thoroughly examined in all the studies by the committee. The process of manufacturing teachers is by "the normal school;" we call it "the monitorial school" or "school for monitors." That for the girls is held weekly, on Saturday from nine to two o'clock, under the care of five of our most efficient teachers, three male and two female. The boys' school has two teachers, and is held on the same day and place from March to November; but from November to March, it is held five evenings in the week. At these schools not only the monitors but in some instances the primary female teachers, attend for the purpose of continuing their studies, with the prospect of promotion to the upper public schools. A limited number of scholars from the 9th class (the highest division) of the school are also privileged to attend. These are familiarly called "cadets." You will perceive that from such abundant raw material, what success may be hoped for in preparing the best sort of teachers for our schools, as the selection for "cadets," is from among the brightest of the first ranks of the school. You will also observe that the progress is from the highest class acting as "Teaching monitors" in the schools, to "cadets" or privileged scholars at the normal schools, then to "paid monitors," then "past monitors," then "assistants," and at last a "principal." And those who thus progress through the several grades are very likely to be only such as aspire to teaching as a profession, and who have a natural tact for such occupation. The committee themselves may, with caution and observation, do much towards influencing such results in the choice of "cadets," and the encouragement to promotion from monitors, to past monitors, &c. There is little doubt that the monitor's school we have established will eventually, with some trifling modification, prove a normal school of a superior character. It will certainly supply us with good teachers for our own schools, and may enable us to do somewhat in the same time for the cause of common schools. We have erected a Trustee's Hall, now nearly finished, where accommodations are provided for the "monitor's schools," where will also be placed for their use, and the teachers, a library of suitable reading to promote their improvement in general knowledge, literary and scientific, and the subject of teaching and education, with those advantages and the expository lessons of the school room, and assigned tasks to be studied at home, and putting their knowledge into use by teaching daily in their schools, they must advance to be practical and proficient teachers if they have any desire so to do.

Our monitors school for girls, is larger than the boys; the latter has not probably more than thirty, the former one hundred and thirty; this is owing to our own primary schools being taught by females and female monitors, and the first schools by females and female monitors, and our boys school number only the monitors of sixteen schools, two in each school; in some cases they, for special reasons are released from attendance.

PRIMARY SCHOOLS.

These schools intended for very young children, were established in 1831-32, to bring the means of early instruction to the doors of the very poor, who could not or would not attend the larger schools at a greater distance. They now number 52 for whites, and 5 for colored children, and include on the register 7581, with an average attendance for the winter of 5519. There were 2091 visits made by all of the trustees to these schools alone during the past six months, (winter of 1841-42.) They have increased the school attendance of poor children—have relieved poor parents of the care of their children during school hours—have formed good habits of order, regularity and punctuality in children who would otherwise have been vagrants, and prepared them to make earlier and higher advances in the studies of the public schools. Out of 4334 children present in the primary school in November 1840, one-tenth were bare-footed. During that time the thermometer ranged from 18° to 22°.

MASSACHUSETTS.

Fourth Annual Report of the Board of Education, together with the Fourth Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board.

The Report of the Board is confined principally to the subject of

NORMAL SCHOOLS.

The intention of the Legislature to provide for the special education of candidates for the profession of teaching has been, to a considerable extent, carried into effect. There are now three Normal Schools in operation, under the auspices of the Commonwealth, one located at Lexington, another at Barre, and the third at Bridgewater; the first, under the care of Cyrus Peirce, Esq.; the second, under that of Rev. Samuel P. Newman, and the last, of Col. Nicholas Tillinghast. In the utility and success of Normal Schools, all who have been acquainted with the course of these institutions, feel an increased confidence.

In these schools, the mode of instruction is skilfully adapted to discipline the faculties of the pupils, to communicate information, and teach them how best to perform the same offices for others. Females only are admitted at Lexington, and none for a term less than one year. Both sexes are taught at Bridgewater and Barre, and received for shorter periods. On this account, there are fewer pupils at the Normal School at Lexington, which commenced on the 3d day of July, 1839. The number of pupils was at first but small, but it has been constantly, though very gradually increasing. August 11, 1840, the first Academic year closed with twenty-five pupils. The term which has just ended, was closed on the 22d of December last, with thirty-four pupils. And the number for the present term, which commenced on the 6th of January inst., will not probably vary materially from the last, though it is somewhat larger, and will probably be further increased. This school has been in operation about eighteen months. The interest and devotion to the purpose for which the institution was established, have been very gratifying during the whole period, and at no time more so than at present. The progress of the pupils generally in those branches of knowledge required to be taught in our schools, has been in the highest degree flattering, and the clearness and exactness of their information will be of great advantage to them in their professional duties hereafter. In the principles and practice of the art of teaching also, they have made quite as rapid proficiency, as any judicious friend of the system could have anticipated. The model or experimental school connected with this institution, sustains a high reputation among the people of the vicinity, and has proved to be of essential service in familiarizing the intended teachers with the practical working of the lessons of the Normal School.

Several pupils of this institution have been employed as teachers, since completing their studies there. Their success has been for the most part remarkable, and acknowledged to be such by all who have had opportunities of observing their schools.

The experiment of a special education for the business of teaching, if that can be called an experiment which has been approved by an extensive experience of more than half a century, is satisfactory, so far as its results can yet be judged of, at Lexington; and this school being the oldest of the three established in the Commonwealth, its history is on that account the more important, and has deserved a more particular examination.

The Normal School at Barre, commenced in September, 1839, and has continued for four terms. The average number of pupils during the whole period, has been a little more than forty. During the last term there were forty-seven; twenty-six males, and twenty-one females. Of the whole number who have attended thus far, about half have attended for a single term only; most of the remainder have continued for two terms.

The scholars who have left this school, have sustained a high reputation in their profession as teachers. They appear to be decidedly better qualified for their task, both by their thorough acquaintance with the elementary branches of learning and their familiarity with the principles and practice of the

art of teaching, than the majority of those generally employed in the care of schools. Several of them have been eminently successful, and, on the whole, the experiment at Barre has thus far, to say the least, fully met the reasonable expectations of its friends.

The Normal School at Bridgewater, commenced on the 10th of September, 1840, and has just entered on its second term. The school opened with twenty-eight pupils, of whom twenty-one were females. At the present term, there are thirty-five scholars, of whom twenty-six are females. The condition of this school is excellent, and there is no reason to doubt that it will be equally efficient with the others in the preparation of teachers to improve and reform the whole common school education of the Commonwealth.

The Board have reason to be fully satisfied with the manner in which Messrs. Pierce, Newman and Tillinghast have discharged their arduous and important duties. They have devoted themselves with indefatigable zeal to the work, and were happily fitted to carry it on in the most eligible course.

As this school is the most interesting experiment now making on this side the Atlantic, we subjoin a letter from the Principal, in reply to some inquiries respecting its organization and condition.

LEXINGTON, January 1, 1841.

DEAR SIR,

I very cheerfully comply with your request to communicate to you, information in regard to the normal school in this place. I will take up the points on which you have desired information, in the order you have named them.

1. *Direction and Inspection.*—The school is under the immediate direction and inspection of a board of visitors chosen from, and by the board of education. The administration of the school has in fact, been almost entirely under the direction of the principal. Of rules and orders regulating the terms of admission,—the course and term of study, &c. &c., I have received nothing more than what is published in the number of the Common School Journal for February 1839, to which I refer you.*

*The following regulations are extracted from the number referred to.

ADMISSION.

As a prerequisite to admission, candidates must declare it to be their intention to qualify themselves to become school teachers. If males, they must have obtained the age of *seventeen* years complete, and of *sixteen*, if females; and must be free from any disease or infirmity, which would unfit them for the office of teachers. They must undergo an examination and prove themselves to be well versed in orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography and arithmetic. They must furnish satisfactory evidence of good intellectual capacity and of high moral character and principles. Examinations for admission will take place at the commencement of each academic year, and oftener at the discretion and convenience of the Visitors and the Principal.

TERM OF STUDY.

The *minimum* of the term of study is fixed at one year. If application have been assiduous and proficiency good, the pupil may receive, at the expiration of that time, a certificate of qualification.

COURSE OF STUDY.

The studies first to be attended to, in the Normal Schools, are those which the law requires to be taught in the district schools, viz orthography, reading, writing, English grammar, geography and arithmetic. When these are thoroughly mastered, those of a higher order will be progressively taken.

Any person wishing to remain at the school more than one year, in order to increase his qualifications for teaching a public school, may do so, having first obtained the consent of the Principal; and therefore a further course of study is marked out. The whole course, properly arranged, is as follows:

1. Orthography, Reading, Grammar, Composition and Rhetoric, Logic. 2. Writing, Drawing. 3. Arithmetic, mental and written, Algebra, Geometry, Book-keeping, Navigation, Surveying. 4. Geography, ancient and modern, with Chronology, Statistics and General History. 5. Physiology. 6. Mental Philosophy. 7. Music. 8. Constitution and History of Massachusetts and of the United States. 9. Natural Philosophy and Astronomy. 10. Natural History and Astronomy. 11. Natural History. 12. *The science and art of teaching, with reference to all the above named studies.*

A portion of the Scriptures shall be read daily, in every Normal School.

A selection from the above course of studies will be made for

2. *Building.*—The normal school is an edifice fifty feet in length, and forty in breadth, two stories high, with suitable out buildings; pleasantly situated in the angle of two roads near the old battlefield; enclosed in a yard of convenient dimensions, which is ornamented with trees and shrubbery. In the basement is a kitchen, dining-room, washroom and woodhouse—together with store rooms; on the ground floor, are a parlor and bed room for steward, a sitting room for the young ladies, (boarders,) and one school room; in the second story are five dormitories with a school room; and in the attic; four dormitories. The house will accommodate about twenty boarders;—the two school rooms will seat, from seventy five to eighty scholars; the lower room is now used for the model school. There is access to the school rooms from the main body of the building as well as from without.

This building is private property now held as security by the trustees of the ministerial fund in this place, by whom it is hired to the board of education for a moderate rent. When the board of education were seeking a suitable location for a normal school in this section of the commonwealth, said trustees offered this building for their accommodation; and they together with other friends of education in this place, pledged themselves to raise \$1000 in behalf of the school. The building and premises may be worth from \$5000 to \$7000.

3. *Revenue.*—A portion of \$10,000 from private munificence and of an equal sum granted by the Legislature is, I believe, the entire amount of funds. Scholars pay their own board (\$2 per week,) and meet all incidental charges, such as for fuel, cleaning, &c. Class-books are mostly supplied by private munificence. Tuition is gratis.

4. *Inventory.*—All the furniture of the boarding House establishment, belongs to the steward, who has the use of the building gratis, furnishes it at his own risk and expense, and gets his pay from his boarders;—he cannot however charge more than \$2 per week for board, including washing.

The school has two stoves for heating, two maps, a pair of globes, an apparatus for illustrating the most important principles of Natural Philosophy, and astronomy, a small library of about 100 vols. chiefly works on education and for reference;—all worth from \$600 to \$800.

5. *Maintenance.*—Reference to what I have said under Nos. 3. and 4.

6. *Teachers.*—The principal is the only teacher at present in the school: he is paid by a fixed salary. The model school is taught by the pupils of the normal school.

7. *Number of pupils.*—The whole number that has been in the school, is forty one. The greatest number at any time, thirty four. In the model school, thirty has been the usual number.

8. *What is required of applicants for admission.*—For an answer to this allow me to refer you to the School Journal as before.

9. *Studies pursued, and text books, art of teaching, &c.*—For the full course contemplated, I refer you to the Journal as above. The branches that have been *actually* taken up are the following, viz., all the common branches *particularly and fully*: together with Composition, Geometry, Algebra, Physiology; Natural, Intellectual and Moral Philosophy, Natural History, Botany, Political Economy, Book-keeping, Vocal Music, and the *art of Teaching*. The books used in the school are Worcester's Dictionary, and Worcester's Fourth Book, Abbot's Teacher, Russell's First Lessons, Testament, Grund's Geometry, Colburn's Sequel and Algebra, Wayland's Moral Philosophy, Newman's Political Economy, Hitchcock's Book-keeping, Combe's Constitution of Man, Combe's Physiology, Briggs

those who are to remain at the School but one year, according to the particular kind of school, it may be their intention to teach.

VISITERS.

Each Normal School will be under the immediate inspection of Visitors, who are, in all cases, to be chosen from the board, except that the Secretary of the board shall be competent to serve as one of said Visitors.

INSTRUCTORS.

The board will appoint for each school a Principal Instructor, who shall direct and conduct the whole business of government and instruction, subject to the rules of the board and the supervision of the visitors.

At all examinations, the Principal shall attend and take such part therein, as the visitors may assign to him; and he shall make reports to them, at such times and on such points, as they may require.

The visitors will appoint the assistant Instructors, when authorized and directed to do so by the board. The assistants will perform such duties, as the Principal may assign to them.

To each Normal School an Experimental or Model School will be attached where the pupils of the Normal School can apply the knowledge which they acquire in the science of teaching, to practice.

ham's Mental Excitement, Smellie's Natural History, Comstock's Botany, Abercrombie's Mental Philosophy, Combe's Moral Philosophy, Story's Constitution of U. S., Newman's Rhetoric, Hayward's Physiology, Day's Algebra, Scientific Class Book by Johnson for the various branches of Natural Philosophy.

You ask for a full account of my manner of instruction in the *art of Teaching*. This, it is not easy to give. From what I say, you may get some idea of what I *attempt*; and of the *manner* of it. Two things I have aimed at, especially in this school. 1. To teach *thoroughly* the principles of the several branches studied, so that the pupils may have a *clear and full understanding* of them. 2nd, to teach the pupils by my own *example*, as well as by *precepts*, the *best way of teaching the same things* effectually to others. I have four different methods of recitation. 1st, by question and answer; 2nd, by conversation; 3rd, by calling on one, two, three, more or less, to give an analysis of the whole subject contained in the lesson, and 4th, by requiring written analyses in which the *ideas* of the author are stated in the *language* of the pupil. I do not mean that these are all practised at the same exercise. The students understand that, at all the recitations, they are at perfect liberty to suggest queries, doubts, opinions. At all the recitations we have more or less of discussion. Much attention is paid to the *manner* in which the pupils *set forth*, or *state* their positions. I am ever mingling or attempting to mingle, at these exercises, theory and example; frequently putting the inquiry to them, not only; 'how do you understand such and such a statement?' but, 'how would you express such and such a sentiment, or explain such a principle, or illustrate such a position to a class, which you may be teaching?' "Let me," I say to them, "hear your statements, or witness your modes of illustrating and explaining." In this connexion I frequently call them to the black board for visible representation. They make the attempt; I remark upon their manner of doing it, and endeavor to show them in what respect it may be improved. Sometimes, instead of reciting the lesson directly to me, I ask them to imagine themselves for the time, acting in the *capacity* of teachers, to a class of young pupils, and to adopt a style suitable for such a purpose. At many of our recitations, more than half the time is spent with reference to teaching "*the art of teaching*." Besides delivering to the school a written *Formal Lecture* once a week, in which I speak of the qualifications, motives, and duties of teachers, the discipline, management and instruction of schools, and the *manner* in which the various branches should be taught, I am every day, in conversations or a familiar sort of lectures, taking up and discussing more *particularly* and *minutely* some point or points suggested by the exercises or occurrences, it may be of the day, relating to the *internal operations* of the school room, or to physical, moral or intellectual education:—I say much about the views and motives of teachers, and the motives by which they should attempt to stimulate their pupils. And here I would state that my theory goes to the entire exclusion of the *premium and emulation system*, and of corporal punishment. My confidence in it is sustained and strengthened by a full and fair experiment for more than one year in a public school composed of seventy scholars of both sexes. I am constantly calling up real or supposed cases, and either asking the pupils what they would do in such case, or stating to them what I would do myself, or both. As a specimen of such questions, take the following viz.; on going into a school as teacher, what is the first thing you would do? How will you proceed to bring to order, and arrange your school? Will you have many rules or few? Will you announce beforehand a code of laws, or make special rules as they may be needed? What *motives* do you purpose to appeal to, and what *means* will you adopt to make your pupils interested in their studies? What method will you adopt to teach spelling, reading, arithmetic? What will you do with the perseveringly idle and troublesome? What will you do if your scholars quarrel? lie? swear? What will you do if a scholar tells you he *won't* do as he is directed? If a question in any ordinary lesson, say arithmetic comes up, which you cannot solve readily, what will be your resort? Should you be chiefly ambitious to teach *much*, or to teach *thoroughly*? How would you satisfy yourself that your teaching is thorough, effectual? To what branches shall you attach most importance, and why? Will you aim chiefly to exercise the *faculties*, or communicate instruction? Besides these daily discussions or conversations we have a *regular debate* every saturday, in which the principles involved in these and similar questions are discussed.

Reading, I teach by oral inculcation of the principles as contained in Porter's Rhetorical Reader, (which strike me as in the main correct,) and by example; reading myself before the whole class; hearing the pupils read, and then reading the same piece myself, pointing out their faults, and calling upon them to read again and again, and even the third and fourth time. They also read to each other in my presence. This is a most difficult art to teach. Very few good readers are to be found either in our schools or elsewhere. Spelling I teach both orally and by writing from the reading lesson, for I think each method has its advantages. Orthography has not

yet received quite its merited attention in our schools. Most persons in business life have to *write*; few comparatively are called upon to read publicly, for this reason it is more important to be a correct speller than a fine reader.

I have adopted no text book in teaching Geography. Worcester's is chiefly used. My method has been to give out a subject (a particular country e. g.) for examination. The class make search, using what maps and books they have at command, and get all the information of every kind they can, statistical, historical, geographical, of the people, manners, religion, government, business, &c. and at the recitation we have the *results* of their researches. Giving to each a separate subject, I sometimes require the pupils to make an imaginary voyage or journey to one, two, three or more countries, and give an account of every thing on their return. If I were to teach Geography to a class of *young beginners*, I should commence with the town in which they live.

In Grammar I have adopted no particular text book. I am teaching a class of beginners in the model school without a book.

In Moral Instruction we use both Wayland and Combe; and our recitations are conducted as above described. There are no subjects in which scholars manifest more interest than in questions of morals. This I have noticed in all schools. It shows how easy it would be to do what is so much needed, if the teachers are disposed; viz., to cultivate the *moral faculties*. In connexion with reading the scriptures at the opening of the school in the morning, it is my practice to remark on points of practical duty as far as I can go on common ground.

10. *Annexed School or Model School*.—This school consists of thirty pupils of both sexes from the age of six to ten inclusive, taken promiscuously from families in the various districts of the town. The children pay nothing for tuitions; find their own books, and bear the incidental expenses. This school is under the general superintendence and inspection of the principal of the normal school. After it was arranged, the general course of instruction and discipline being settled, it was committed to the immediate care of the pupils of the normal school, one acting as superintendent and two as assistants, for one month in rotation for all who are thought prepared to take a part in its instruction. In this experimental school, the teachers are expected to apply the principles and methods which they have been taught in the normal school, with liberty to suggest any improvements which may occur to them. Twice every day the principal of the normal school goes into the model school for general observation and direction, spending from one half hour to one hour each visit. In these visits, I either sit and watch the general operations of the school, or listen attentively to a particular teacher and her class, or take a class myself, and let the teacher be a listener and observer. After the exercises have closed, I comment upon what I have seen and heard before the teachers, telling them what I deem good, and what faulty, either in their doctrine or their practice, their theory or their manner. Once or twice each term I take the whole normal school with me into the model school-room and teach the model school myself in the presence of the pupils of the normal school, they being listeners and observers. In these several ways, I attempt to combine, as well as I can, theory and practice, precept and example. In regard to the materials of which it is composed, and the studies attended to, the model school is as nearly a fac simile of a *common district school* as one district school is of another. In regard to the discipline and management, I am aware there may be more dissimilarity. The Superintendent is not situated precisely as she will be, when placed alone in a proper *district school*. This could not be effected without having several model schools. But, limited as is the field of operation for the superintendent, it is wide enough as the teachers find, for the development of considerable tact and talent. From the model school we exclude all appeals to fear, premiums or emulation; and yet we have had good order, and a fair amount of study.

11. *Rules and Regulations prescribed by the Teacher*.—They are the following:

1st. The school shall commence at 8 o'clock A. M. and continue till 12 o'clock allowing one hour for recess: and at 2 o'clock P. M. and continue till 5 o'clock.

2nd. The pupils shall attend constantly and punctually. All instances of lateness or absence shall be accounted for to the satisfaction of the principal.

3rd. During study hours the pupils shall abstain from all *communication* with each other, and from *whatever* may interrupt their studies or divert their attention.

4th. Scholars shall supply themselves with all necessary books and apparatus. The practice of borrowing and lending shall not obtain in school.

5th. Pupils wishing to leave town, shall make known their desire to the Principal.

6th. The pupils shall attend public worship on the Sabbath.

7th. One hour before breakfast, all the interval between school sessions, and between the afternoon sessions and supper, and two

and a half hours after supper, may be spent in physical exercise, suitable recreation, and social intercourse. Other hours until 9 o'clock P. M. shall be devoted strictly to reading, study, and the business of the school.

12. *Departure from the Normal School—Examinations &c.*—On these points I refer you to the Common School Journal. Four or five scholars left at the close of the last term for the purpose of taking schools. No examination by the Visitors was held, no formality was passed through, and no certificate has been given. It must not, however, be inferred from this that they were thought unworthy or deficient.

13. *Suggestions as to modifications of the course pursued.*—With some slight modifications, which I cannot easily make intelligible in a short statement, I shall pursue, the year to come, the same general course as above described.

In all my instructions, and especially in the *model school*, I depend much upon the black-board and *visible illustration*.

Upon the pupils of the normal school I inculcate much and often the idea, that their success depends much upon themselves; upon the *motives* with which they take up the profession and pursue it; upon their correct insight into human nature, and their deep, untiring interest to improve it. They must be moved by a *pure and lofty desire* of doing good. They must be intelligent, discerning. They must be firm, constant, uniformly patient and uniformly kind.

It would be easy to be more particular, but this communication is already too long: besides to go *minutely* into a description of my *manner of teaching* the several branches both in the Normal and Model school, would be to write a book, and not a letter simply.

Allow me to express my high gratification in your late visit to the Normal school. You have had much opportunity to see and compare many schools. For any suggestions in regard to what you saw at Lexington for the *improvement* of the school, I would be very thankful. I have undiminished confidence in the feasibility of the plan of Normal Schools, if sustained by the sentiment of the community, it could be allowed to continue in operation long enough to make a fair experiment. But on *this point* I have increasing fears.

Your obt't and humble servant,
CYRUS PEIRCE.

Principal of the Normal School at Lexington.

We were highly gratified with what we saw and heard at the visit above alluded to. We know of no institution on this side of the Atlantic, at all comparable with this for the training of teachers for common schools. If it is permitted to go down, it will be a burning disgrace, not only to the Legislature which shall refuse to sustain it by liberal appropriations, but to the friends of common school education generally, who should come forward with their sympathy and co-operation to encourage Mr. Pierce in his interesting but exhausting labors.

We intended to have given a brief account of our visit; but we find in the following extracts from letters written by Mr. G. B. Emerson, of Boston, and Dr. S. G. Howe, of the Blind Asylum, after a similar visit, our own impressions so fully embodied, that there is no occasion to add more.

EXTRACT FROM MR. EMERSON'S LETTER.

In the normal school, the object *seemed* to be, for I have had no opportunity of learning what *are* the intentions of the principal, first, to give great thoroughness in those branches which are of the greatest importance in the common elementary schools, such as Reading, Writing, Arithmetic, &c.:—next, to add those studies which would give an acquaintance with the minds and characters of children, just as, in an agricultural school we should expect to see communicated an acquaintance with plants, and the nature of soils, and lastly, to give some knowledge of those principles of science on which children are almost inquisitive, and with which, therefore, a well qualified teacher's mind should be amply stored.

These all were admirably well taught; and what was still better, the pupils seemed to have imbibed, in a most remarkable degree, the zeal and earnestness which are so essential to success in a teacher, and which yet are so uncommon. This was evidenced, by the readiness of their answers, the clearness of their explanations, and the interest with which they engaged in the discussions, and still more by the life that had been communicated to the model school below.

In this latter, which may be considered as the test of the success with which the operations of the upper school are

managed, I listened, with still greater interest, to the manner in which questions were put and answered, the object of which was to excite the attention of the children to the meaning of what they were reading. There was nothing of the listlessness of manner, and monotony of tone which are so often observed, and often so inevitable, in common schools. The same was observable in the answers given to questions on the elements of geography, and on grammar; very thorough instruction had evidently been given—the children had been made clearly to comprehend what they had been taught—yet they occasionally make mistakes, enough to show, that their own minds were at work, and, of course, sometimes going wrong.

In this school, the great objects in view, seemed to be to ascertain and impart the best modes of teaching the art of reading intelligently, distinctly, and naturally,—of communicating the elements of grammar, arithmetic and geography,—of bringing the mind into complete and cheerful activity in making these acquisitions,—of acquiring the art of governing by gentleness and without resort to violence,—and of imparting the love of order, quiet and regularity. In all these respects, the success had already been signal.

EXTRACT FROM DR. HOWE'S LETTER.

It has been in my power to examine many schools in this country, and in various parts of the world, but I am free to declare that, in my opinion, the best school I ever saw, in this or any other country, is the Normal School at Lexington.

The discipline of the school is perfect; the pupils regard their teacher with profound respect, yet tender affection; their interest in their studies is deep and constant; their attainments are of a high order; and they thoroughly *understand* every subject as far as they go.

But not for these things do I give this school the preference; for others in this country and in Europe may equal it in these respects; but I prefer it, because the system of instruction is truly philosophical; because it is based upon the principle that the young mind hungers and thirsts for knowledge, as the body does for food; because it makes the pupils not merely recipients of knowledge, but calls all their faculties into operation to *attain it themselves*;—and finally, because relying upon the higher and nobler parts of the pupil's nature, it rejects all addresses to bodily fears, and all appeals to selfish feelings.

There is one point of view, however, in which the school particularly interested me, and in which it presented a beautiful moral spectacle, the memory of which will dwell long in my mind—it was the fact that every pupil seemed impressed with a deep sense of the importance of the calling which she was to follow; they seemed to feel that at least the temporal weal or woe of hundreds of human beings might be dependent upon the fidelity with which they should perform their duty as teachers. Consequently, every one was desirous of becoming acquainted with the philosophy of mind; and they received such excellent instruction, that they seemed to understand the various springs and incentives to action which exist in the child's bosom.

To me, sir, it was delightful, to see that they were becoming acquainted with the nature of the children's mind *before* they undertook to manage them, and that they would not, like other teachers, have to learn at the children's expense.

Perhaps, sir, you, like myself, may have *suffered* in boyhood under some usher, who was learning his trade by experimenting upon you, as the barber's apprentice learns to shave upon the chins of his master's less favored customers; and it you have ever been a teacher, you may look back with bitter regret upon the course you followed during the first years of your practice.

But this is a subject so completely set at rest in the mind of every enlightened philanthropist, that it would be a work of supererogation to urge any more considerations upon you.

I will only repeat to you, what I have said to others, that if instead of the twenty-five teachers who will go out from the normal school at Lexington—there could go out over the length and breadth of Massachusetts, five hundred like them to take charge of the rising generation, that generation would have more reason to bless us, than if we should cover the whole State with rail-roads like a spider's web, and bring physical comforts to every man's door, and leave an overflowing treasury to divide its surplus among all the citizens.

Fourth Annual Report of the Secretary of the Board.**THE IMPROVEMENT OF COMMON SCHOOLS NOT A PARTY QUESTION.**

Devoting my whole time and strength to the furtherance of this one object, and rigidly abstaining from all public action, respecting the controverted topics of the day, it has afforded me unmingled satisfaction to perceive, that this course of conduct is in unison with the common sentiments of our community; and that, as it were, by tacit and almost unanimous consent, the grand and enduring interests of education are held to belong to all mankind, and not to be restricted to any portion or party of them. It is a cause which enlists its advocates and champions alike, from ranks, which, on other subjects, are arrayed in hostile attitudes against each other; and it seems now, at least to a very great extent, to have become an axiom in the public mind, that the diffusion of useful knowledge, the increase of intellectual energy, the habit of impartial investigation, and a higher moral purity and purpose, will assuredly, in the end, promote whatever is right, and diminish whatever is wrong, in the views of all the parties into which our society is unhappily divided. As, from the very nature and constitution of the human mind, and of the world in which it is placed, error and wrong can be permanently serviceable to no one, it becomes the interest as well as the duty of all, to establish and encourage whatever is true in principle and right in conduct; and where fundamental differences prevail, as to what is true and right, it should be the object of all to labor unitedly in training up more able, more impartial and purer minds, which may have the light to discern, and the wisdom to adopt, higher views, both in theory and practice, than were possessed by their doubting or contending predecessors.

EVIDENCES OF IMPROVEMENT SINCE 1838.

In 1838, the amount of money raised by taxes for the support of schools, including only the wages of teachers, board, } \$147,509 96
and fuel was }

In 1839, the amount raised for the same purpose was \$177,221 24

Here is an increase in the appropriations, amounting, in round numbers, to \$30,000, in a single year. But the *real* increase last year, in the expenditure for teacher's wages, board and fuel, must have considerably exceeded the apparent. It had been a very prevalent custom in the state, for districts to abstract a portion of the money raised for wages, board and fuel, and to appropriate it for schoolhouse repairs, and other incidental expenses. Although, to some extent, this may have been done, during the last year, yet I have reason to believe, that a practice so illegal and reprehensible as this, is now mainly abolished. No stronger evidence of an increasing interest in our schools can be adduced, than this substantial advance in the amount of appropriations for their support; nor can any act be more creditable to our citizens than these voluntary levies for the cause of education.

Another point of comparison, not less gratifying, consists in the average length of the schools. For the school year of 1837, their average length was six months and twenty-five days; for that, ending May 1, 1839, it was seven months and four days, and for that ending May 1st, 1840, seven months and ten days, exhibiting an average increase, in three years, of almost a fortnight, in the length of about three thousand schools, i. e. nearly fifteen hundred months, or a hundred and twenty-five years in the whole.

Again, the prospects of that meritorious class of persons engaged in teaching our schools, are decidedly improving. In 1837, the average wages per month, including board, paid to male teachers was \$25.44. Last year, it was \$33.03, being an increase in three years, of \$7.64 per month. In 1837, the average wages, inclusive of board, paid to females, was \$11.38. Last year, it was \$12.75, being an increase, for the same time, of \$1.37 per month. The school year 1839-40, when compared with that of 1838-9, also exhibits a very decided advance in respect to the wages both of males and females, notwithstanding that the first mentioned was a year when other departments of business were discharging hundreds from employment, and compelling them to seek elsewhere for occupation and subsistence. From the nature of the case, however, we are forbidden to anticipate equal advances, either in regard to the amount of wages, or the length of the schools, in coming years, because a proportional increase every year, would lead to a rate of wages indefinitely high, and to the impossible result of more than twelve months' schooling in a year.

The visitation of the schools by the school committees was at least twice, if not three times greater, last year, than in any previous year since 1827, when the law creating them was enacted; and these visitations confer upon the schools unnumbered benefits. Visits by parents, also, were very much increased, compared with any former year. In regard to parental visits, however, there has been a great difference between different districts; some schools having received the full advantages of such visits, while others have been left to plod on their slow and weary way, unanimated by them.

More schoolhouses have been erected within the state, during the last year, than for the ten years preceding 1838; and, generally speaking, they are of a description vastly superior to those formerly built.

Boston, Lowell, Charlestown, Roxbury, have erected splendid edifices, at once demonstrating the liberality of their citizens, and foretelling the benefits to be enjoyed by their children. Within the last eight months, the town of Plymouth has erected six new schoolhouses, and repaired three old ones.

These and similar improvements, in the administration of the system, though they may elude statistical tables, cannot have been made without the happiest influences, both intellectual and moral upon the schools. A pupil may understand the lessons he reads better than before; he may acquire knowledge in such a way that it will stay by him during life, instead of evaporating just as fast as his recitations proceed; he may be stimulated to double his exertions, and thereby to increase both his attainments and his ability; he may be led to act from higher motives, and to look upon all the great duties of life with a clearer vision, and yet there may be no scales, in which all these improvements can be weighed, at the close of the school term. It is the steady accumulation of these elements, during the years of pupillage, which leads to the formation of a lofty character in adult life. When, therefore, we see that favoring influences are at work, we cannot be sceptical as to their results. We do not doubt the influences of one fertilizing shower, or of one day of genial sunshine upon our grain-fields or our orchards, though we cannot measure the increase of size in a single kernel of the grain, nor apply any subtle test to show how much the fruit has gained in the richness of its flavor.

In regard to the current year, I have reason to believe that the improvement of the schools, in the more appropriate selection of studies, in the thoroughness of the instruction given, and in that exercise of mind that gives strength as well as knowledge, will greatly exceed that of any previous year. The grand truths, that the object of instruction and training is not so much to enable a child to narrate the great things which others have done, as to cultivate the judgment and discretion by which, in similar circumstances, he could do the same things himself; not so much to commit to memory the contents of a book, as to acquire, in some good degree, the knowledge and ability, by which the book was produced, and from which, if the book were lost, he could re-produce it; that study and recitations are of little consequence, except as they lead to habits of investigation, and of a clear statement of things known; and that external actions are nothing in comparison with the motives from which they emanate; these reforming and revolutionizing truths are every day penetrating deeper and deeper into the minds of those who are superintending the education of our youth.

MODES OF ASCERTAINING AND DIFFUSING INFORMATION RESPECTING THE SCHOOLS OF THE STATE.

In the first place, an agent is sent into each county in the state, to make a diligent and laborious tour of exploration. The results of his survey are then communicated to the Legislature, and by them are sent to every town, to every school committee, and to every school district. If these communications contain any general principles or suggestions, which are deemed worthy of consideration, the school committees and friends of education in the respective towns, explain their relevancy, and urge upon their fellow citizens the adoption of practical measures to carry out the improvements suggested. The town school committees then make a "detailed" report, respecting the condition of the schools in their own town, for the double purpose of informing their fellow-townsmen what that condition may be, and of transmitting that information to a common centre, where all their reports are collected. The first object,—that of informing their fellow townsmen,—is accomplished, either by the reading of the report in open town meeting, or by printing it for general distribution among the inhabitants; and in either case, by filing the original in the office of the town clerk, where it will be always open for reference. After copies of all the reports have been collected in one place, they are carefully examined; whatever is merely of a local and private character is omitted, because it still remains in the archives of the town whence it came, for the use of the inhabitants; but whatever is of general and permanent utility, is embodied in the Annual Abstract. And here the scattered rays of light, converged to a focus, become a sun. The Abstract is then distributed throughout the Commonwealth, and thus each town and each school committee, in return for its own contributions, receives back the facts, views, suggestions, experience, reasonings, conclusions, of all the others in the state. Knowledge which was local, becomes universal. Experiments which have failed, are not repeated. New methods and arrangements, which are found to work well, are adopted at once, and without the delay or the expense of a first discovery. A coincidence of testimony, as to supposed improvements or deficiencies, inspires confidence, and renders it easier to introduce a good practice in pursuance of a good theory, or to abolish evils, that plead ancient usage for their continuance. Each committee-man and teacher looks upon himself, not as an isolated and solitary individual, toiling in an unknown and narrow sphere, but as a member of a great company, working for a common end;—and this consciousness tends to invigorate each with the strength of all. Towns, too, which heretofore have been most indifferent to the cause, are aroused by the sight of what others are doing; and are stimulated to exertion, if not by the noble desire of excellence, yet at least, by the shame of conspicuous inferiority.